

Listing of Claims:

1-13. (Previously cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A catheter unit comprising:

a housing removably coupled to a tubular introducer sheath, the tubular introducer sheath having a proximal end, a distal end, and a hollow lumen extending longitudinally therethrough;

a needle having a sharpened distal tip and a hollow bore extending longitudinally therethrough, the needle being disposed coaxially within the lumen of the introducer sheath;

an elongated blunting member having a hollow lumen extending longitudinally therethrough and having an open proximal end adjacent to a flash chamber and a blunt distal tip, the elongated blunting member being disposed coaxially within the bore of the needle; the blunting member being axially moveable from a non-blunting position wherein the blunt distal tip of the blunting member is positioned within the bore of the needle a spaced distance proximal to the sharpened distal tip of the needle, to a distally advanced blunting position wherein the blunt distal tip of the blunting member protrudes out of and beyond the sharpened distal tip of the needle;

a [moveable] securing member coupled to the blunting member to engage an outer surface of the introducer sheath and to advance the blunting member to the distally advanced blunting position when the sheath is removed; and

a porous member which is coupled to the housing.

15. (Previously Presented) The catheter unit of claim 14, further comprising:
a lumen in the blunting member for blood to flow which extends longitudinally through the blunting member, the lumen in communication with the flash chamber; and
the assembly being thereby operative such that when the distal end of the needle enters a vessel, such that fluid enters the bore of the needle and passes through the needle and then enters the lumen of the blunting member and exits the blunting member by entering the flash chamber, such that the presence of blood within the flash chamber is visible through at least a transparent portion of the flash chamber.
16. (Previously Presented) The catheter unit of claim 14, wherein the porous member is functionally open allowing fluid from a patient to exit the catheter unit after thirty second of blood entering the flash chamber.
17. (Previously Presented) The catheter unit of claim 14, wherein the porous member is removable.
18. (Previously Presented) The catheter unit of claim 14, wherein the porous member includes cotton high-density polyethylene or ultra high molecular weight polyethylene.
19. (Currently Amended) The catheter of claim 14, wherein the porous ~~number~~ member has a porosity that ranges from about 35% to about 55%.

20. (New) A catheter unit comprising:
- a needle secured to a housing;
 - a blunting member movably received in the needle, the blunting member having a proximal end and a blunt distal end, the proximal end being disposed in the housing;
 - a securing member affixed to the proximal end of the blunting member, and having a portion extending towards the distal end of the blunting member, the securing member being contained wholly within the housing;
 - a flash chamber disposed at a proximal end of the housing; and
 - a porous member associated with the flash chamber.
21. (New) The catheter unit of claim 20, wherein the needle has a sharpened distal tip and a hollow bore extending longitudinally therethrough, and wherein the blunting member is disposed coaxially within the bore of the needle.
22. (New) The catheter unit of claim 20, wherein the blunting member has a hollow lumen extending longitudinally therethrough, and is open at the proximal end and the blunt distal tip.
23. (New) The catheter unit of claim 22, wherein the open proximal end is adjacent the flash chamber such that the hollow lumen of the blunting member is in communication with the flash chamber.

24. (New) The catheter unit of claim 20, wherein the blunting member has a non-blunting position wherein the blunt distal tip of the blunting member is positioned within the needle a spaced distance proximal to a sharpened distal tip of the needle, and a blunting position wherein the blunt distal tip of the blunting member protrudes out of and beyond the sharpened distal tip of the needle.
25. (New) The catheter unit of claim 20, wherein the flash chamber is at least partially transparent.
26. (New) The catheter unit of claim 20, further comprising an introducer sheath having a proximal end, a distal end and a hollow lumen extending longitudinally therethrough, wherein the needle is removably received in the introducer sheath.
27. (New) The catheter unit of claim 20, wherein the porous member is functionally open, allowing a fluid from a patient to exit the catheter unit after thirty seconds of the fluid entering the flash chamber.
28. (New) The catheter unit of claim 20, wherein the porous member is approximately in the range of 35% to 55% porosity.

29. (New) The catheter unit of claim 20, wherein the porous member is made of at least one material selected from the group consisting of cotton, high-density polyethylene, and ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene.
30. (New) The catheter unit of claim 20, wherein the flash chamber has a proximal end and a distal end, and the porous member is attached to the proximal end of the flash chamber.
31. (New) The catheter unit of claim 20, wherein the porous member is removable from the flash chamber.
32. (New) The catheter unit of claim 24, wherein the securing member is contained wholly within the housing when the blunting member is in the non-blunting position.